NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire

Fort Smith

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services

March 2005

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OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2003, the Joint Senior Management Committee (JSMC) began to formalize a process of evaluating consumer's satisfaction with the health and social services system. The project was a collaborative effort between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Authorities as part of their ongoing commitment to evaluation and quality assurance. It also addressed Action Plan Item 5.1.4 - a commitment by the Minister of Health and Social Services to conduct a client satisfaction survey.

JSMC felt it would be best to get feedback from persons using two distinct parts of the system - hospitals and community health centres/social services offices.

In order to address these distinct parts of the system, two different questionnaires and collection methods were used. The Northwest Territories (NWT) Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed to help measure consumer's satisfaction with the four hospitals in the NWT, while the Community Health and Social Services Client Feedback Form was provided at health centres and social services offices.

This report focuses on the results of the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire and is specific to the hospital in Fort Smith.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND DATA LIMITATIONS

A hospital satisfaction working group was established with a project lead from the Department of Health and Social Services and representatives selected by the Chief Executive Officers from each hospital. In consultation with senior management, hospital staff, the NWT Bureau of Statistics and staff from the Department of Health and Social Services, the working group finalized the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

It was recognized early in the process that budget and human resource constraints limited the choices available for the questionnaire methodology. A self-administered questionnaire was the only option available given these constraints. Recognizing that self-administered questionnaires have lower response rates than telephone and/or in-person interviews by trained interviewers, the working group concentrated efforts of getting buy-in and cooperation from front-line hospital staff for questionnaire distribution.

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire was distributed at the four hospitals in the Northwest Territories during the month of October 2004. Patients were provided a questionnaire and encouraged to complete it by front-line hospital staff. Completed questionnaires were returned to the Department where data entry, analysis and the final reports were completed.

The voluntary and self-administered methodology of the questionnaire resulted in valuable feedback from those who responded to the questionnaire, but does not necessarily provide a representative sample.

The limitation of using a questionnaire with a volunteer bias, rather than a randomly selected representative sample, is data from each hospital must be approached with caution, response rates cannot be calculated and the data cannot be calculated from a territorial perspective.

The findings from these questionnaires can be used to:

- provide feedback to senior management and hospital staff;
- recognize areas that are working well;
- indicate areas of improvement;
- provide a component of the hospital accreditation process;
- serve as baseline data for future client satisfaction measurements.

A total of 66 completed questionnaires were received from people utilizing the hospital in Fort Smith during the month of October.

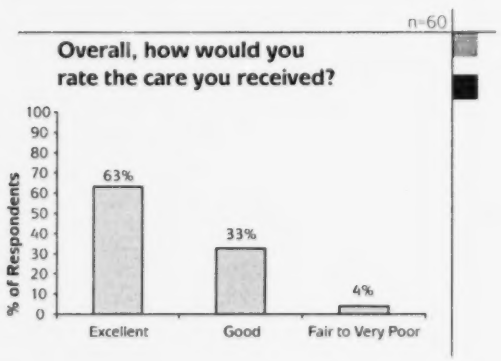
The majority of respondents provided ratings of excellent or good for *every* question asked on the Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Similarly, the majority of comments provided by respondents were also positive. In Fort Smith, 40 respondents (61%) provided comments on their questionnaires.

MEASURES OF HOSPITAL SATISFACTION

OVERALL SATISFACTION

The question that asked, **"Overall, how would you rate the care you received?"** provides a concise summary of the overall findings of the NWT Hospital Satisfaction questionnaire. The vast majority of respondents provided ratings of excellent or good - a clear indication of their satisfaction with the services provided at the hospital.



- A total of 60 respondents provided ratings for this question (n=60).
- Approximately 96% of respondents rated the overall care they received as good or excellent and 4% said fair to very poor.

The following quote summarizes the high level of satisfaction and what the majority of respondents felt the hospital does well:

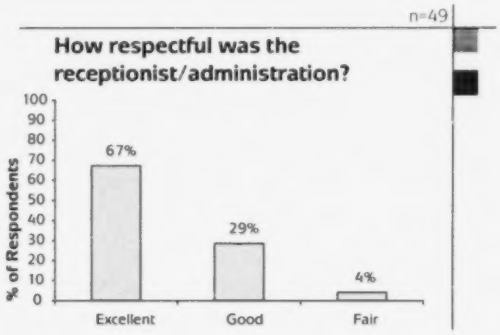
Friendliness - always care about patients first.

Italics in this report indicate comments taken directly from the questionnaires. To protect anonymity of either the respondent or hospital staff, deletions have been indicated with the use of square brackets []. Additions for clarity of quotes have also been noted with the use of square brackets.

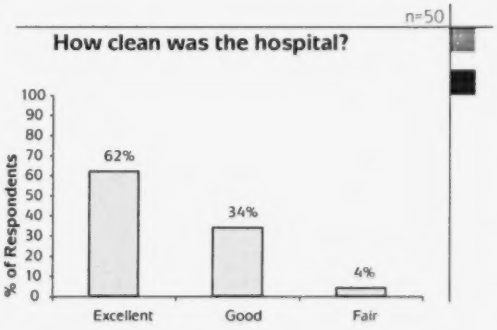
Some percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

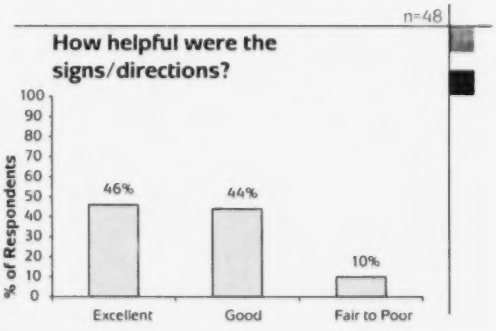
This section of the questionnaire asked five questions dealing with general services related to the hospital.



- 96% of respondents rated respectfulness as good or excellent. Fair ratings were given by 4% of respondents.



- 96% of respondents rated cleanliness as good or excellent while 4% of respondents rated cleanliness as fair.



- 90% of respondents rated the hospital signs as good or excellent while 10% of respondents rated signage as fair to poor.

How was the hospital food?

The low number of applicable responses (15) prevents a reliable analysis for this question.

One respondent suggested the need for more fruits and vegetables to be served, but also said the food was warm each and every day.

How were the interpreter services you received?

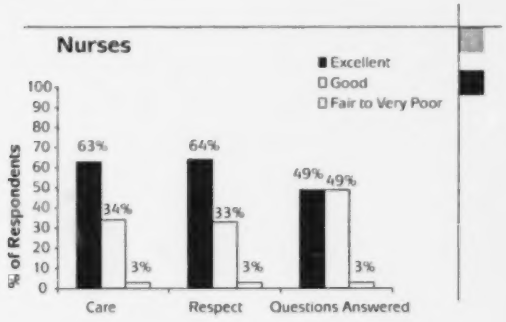
The low number of applicable responses (8) prevents a reliable analysis for this question.

One respondent said the communication regarding interpreter services could be improved by ensuring patients are aware interpreter services are available.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

The Health Care Provider section of the questionnaire was divided into three types of health care providers: nurses, doctors and specialized health care providers. Similar questions were asked of each type of health care provider.

Nurses



- The high level of respondent satisfaction with nurses was evident in the three questions directly related to nursing.
- Questions relating to care, respect and how the nurses answered questions all received good or excellent ratings of 97% or higher.

What do you think about the care you received from the nurses?

A total of 35 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Many positive comments reflected the 97% of respondents who rated the nursing care as good or excellent. These included comments about the helpfulness and friendliness of nurses. Comments also included:

The best nurses in Canada. Well informed.

Nurse was excellent.

How respectful were the nurses?

A total of 36 respondents provided ratings for this question.

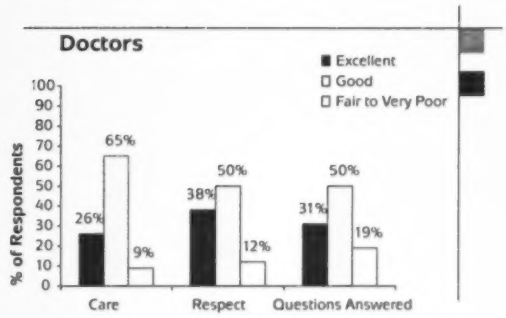
Similar to the care received by nurses, 97% of respondents rated the respectfulness of nurses as good or excellent.

How well did the nurses answer your questions?

A total of 35 respondents provided ratings for this question.

In response to how well the nurses answered questions, 98% of respondents said good or excellent.

Doctors



- Respondents indicated good or excellent ratings of 81% or higher for the three questions directly related to doctors.

What do you think about the care you received from the doctors?

A total of 31 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Six respondents expressed concern about continuity of care due to the turnover in doctors. One respondent suggested:

I think there should be a program in place that will encourage doctors to stay in this community for longer periods of time.

How respectful were the doctors?

A total of 32 respondents provided ratings for this question.

12% of respondents rated the respectfulness of the doctors as fair to very poor, while 88% rated it as good or excellent.

How well did the doctors answer your questions?

A total of 32 respondents provided ratings for this question.

19% of respondents rated the doctors answering their questions as fair to very poor while 81% provided good or excellent ratings.

Specialized Care (For example: blood work, x-ray, physiotherapy, stress test etc.)

- Similar to the questions on the care, respect and how well nurses and doctors answered questions, specialized care providers in Fort Smith also received very high ratings of satisfaction from respondents.

What do you think about the care you received from the specialized care professional (for example, the lab technologist who drew your blood, the physiotherapist)?

A total of 58 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Many comments reflected the 98% of respondents who rated the care from specialized care professionals as good or excellent. Some were general comments:

Very knowledgeable staff.

Warm, open, eager to please health care professionals.

Other comments were specific to the service area:

Lab [staff] are very kind, helpful and make you relax.

The physiotherapist and her assistant are excellent and have excellent PR.

All support staff to doctors seem to do an excellent job considering high turn over in doctors.

How respectful were the specialized health care professionals?

A total of 59 respondents provided ratings for this question.

The question on specialized health care professionals' respectfulness received the highest excellent rating of the questionnaire - 86%.

How well did the specialized health care professionals answer your questions?

A total of 57 respondents provided ratings for this question.

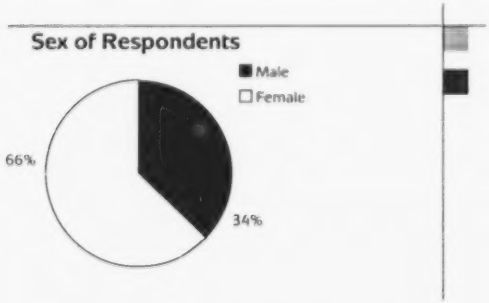
96% of respondents rated the answering of their questions by specialized health care professionals as good or excellent.

Respondents were also asked, **"How would you rate the hours of service for the specialized health care you received?"**

- 91% of respondents rated the hours of service for specialized health care as good or excellent.
- Only one comment was received regarding the hours of service. It suggested that opening at 8:00 am would be better for patients who are fasting.

TREATMENT/PROCEDURE

The questionnaire asked respondents three questions related to their treatment/procedure.



- The vast majority of respondents (74% or higher) indicated that their treatments/procedures were clearly explained, that they were involved in the decisions affecting their care and that they were kept informed about the care planned for them.

Was your treatment/procedure clearly explained to you?

A total of 56 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Only 5% of respondents said their treatment/procedure was not clearly explained, with 95% saying yes or somewhat.

Were you involved in decisions affecting your care?

A total of 47 respondents provided ratings for this question.

A higher number of respondents felt they were not involved in decisions affecting their care - 13%.

Were you kept informed about the care planned for you?

A total of 46 respondents provided ratings for this question.

91% of respondents responded yes or somewhat on being kept informed about the care planned for them.

FEEDBACK

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire asked two open-ended questions to gather more detailed information from respondents:

- **Tell us about the things we are doing well; and**
- **Tell us about the areas in which we could improve.**

Comment sections were also provided following the General, Health Care Providers and Treatment/Procedure sections and at the end of the questionnaire. In Fort Smith, 40 respondents (61%) provided comments on their questionnaires. Some respondents provided multiple comments in more than one section of the questionnaire; therefore the count of comments exceeds 40.

The following is a summary of the comments provided by respondents using the hospital in Fort Smith.

Tell us about the things we are doing well:

The highest number of positive comments related to staff. Approximately 30 comments, or 63% of the 48 positive comments, directly or indirectly praised the staff at the hospital.

Indirect praise or general comments towards staff included things such as:

Great staff!

Pleasant staff.

"Friendly", "professional", "knowledgeable", "caring" and "helpful" were common phrases used to describe staff.

Praise was also directed towards staff in specific service areas such as:

Physio has a caring professional.

Excellent re. X-ray tech.

The staff, especially in the lab, are very good and make you feel at ease and relaxed.

Respondents also provided general comments on the service they received. Positive praise were reflected in the 10 comments such as:

Overall excellent in all areas.

Everything is done very well.

Good communication was another area in which respondents felt the hospital was doing well. These comments included respondents appreciating the care displayed by staff during their visit:

Very approachable. Has good suggestions. Makes me feel that my problems are important and that I'm important as a person. Always good spending time with me no matter how depressed and sore I am.

Explaining about the illness a patient has and helping with how to deal with it.

Respondents also provided positive comments related to the timely service they received. For example:

I was on a waiting list and was called in at the last minute. I appreciated that they were tuned into the waiting list.

Good appointment times that are convenient. They are flexible.

Tell us about the areas in which we could improve:

Cited most often under the need for improvement were comments regarding wait times and the continuity of doctors (13 comments). These two inter-related themes included comments about the length of time to get an appointment and/or to receive the service and the need for steady doctors. For example:

Try and employ some permanent doctors - thus patients familiar and comfortable with doctors and vice-versa.

[Areas which we could improve:] Long wait at times for emergency services due to short staffing.

Takes a long time to get appointments.

Staff were noted in 7 comments suggesting improvement was needed. These comments were related to improving attitude and empathy. For example:

Medical staff should treat all individuals the same regardless of race.

[Areas which we could improve:] Compassion.

Closely related were comments related to the need to improve communications. One respondent suggested:

You definitely need to improve your communication with the Yellowknife hospital and also with the patients you deal with.

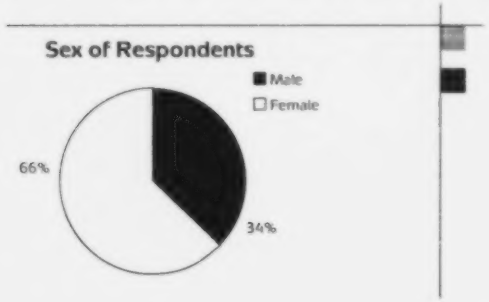
Respondents also felt communication related to treatment could be improved. For example:

The areas where you can improve is to really help understand how the medications are used and how they affect your health. Either they are right for you or not. It will affect other problems when taking them.

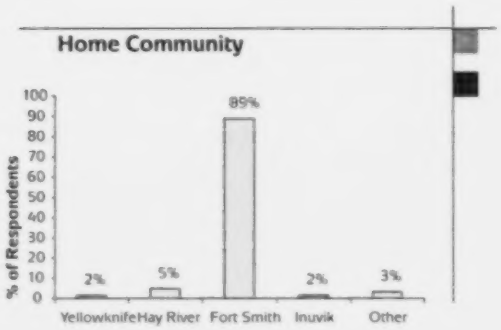
Other comments suggesting the need for improvement included better food, needing more equipment and needing more space for treatment.

DEMOGRAPHICS

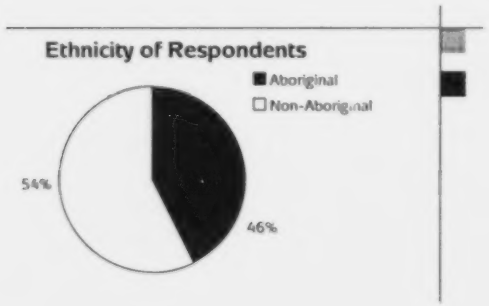
Demographic questions were asked to provide more detailed analysis and comparisons of questionnaire responses where applicable. The demographic also provided information on the 66 respondents who completed questionnaires in Fort Smith.



- Respondents were asked for their sex, home community, ethnicity and age.
- A total of 62 respondents indicated whether they were male or female.

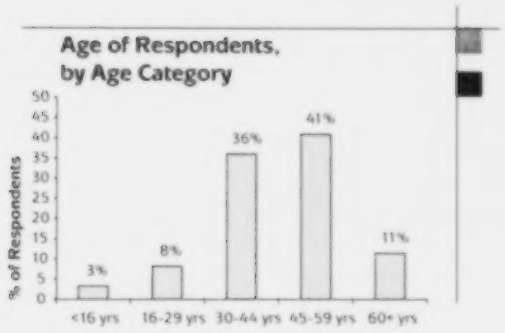


- The majority of respondents were from Fort Smith.
- A total of 63 respondents provided their home community.



- The high non-response rate for the question on ethnicity indicates the sensitivity of this issue - 14 respondents (21%) did not indicate if they were Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal.
- A total of 52 respondents indicated their ethnicity.

The original intent of the questionnaire was to be distributed to people 16 years and older. Questionnaires were received where the age completed was under 16. In some cases, parents completed the questionnaire on behalf of a child receiving the hospital services and put in the child's age (for example 1 year old).



- All completed questionnaires were included in the analysis.
- Excluding the under 16 age category, the average age of respondents was 46 years.
- The age ranged to 84 years old.
- A total of 61 respondents indicated their age.

SERVICE AREA

Each NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire had a space provided for Service Area. In most cases, the service area was filled in by hospital staff prior to questionnaire distribution. The breakdown of completed questionnaires by service area for Fort Smith is as follows:

Service Area	Frequency
Rehabilitation Services	25
Diagnostic Imaging	24
Emergency	6
Ultrasound	6
Acute Care	5
Total	66

It is important to keep in mind that these numbers are only estimates of questionnaires received by service area and should not be used for in-depth analysis. Response rates based on service area received cannot be calculated due to the following reasons:

- the questionnaires and project methodology were not designed to capture a representative, random sample of those using the hospital services. Given the limited budget and resources available, a voluntary, self-administered questionnaire was used.
- there were no identifiers on the questionnaire to link who responded to the questionnaire with administrative databases indicating who used hospital services in October;
- it is not known if the questionnaire was offered to every person using the hospital services during the month of October;
- some patients may have used a service multiple times during the month (for example, physiotherapy) and may not have completed a questionnaire based on each visit;
- some patients may have used multiple services during the same visit. For example, a patient may have used the special clinic, the lab and diagnostic services in one day and chosen to complete the questionnaire with Laboratory Services filled in under Service Area. The person may have completed the questionnaire based only on his/her laboratory service encounter. Conversely, the person may have filled in his/her questionnaire based on all the services encountered during the visit.

CONCLUSION

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire asked respondents general questions relating to reception/administration, hospital cleanliness, signage, hospital food and interpreter services. Respondents also provided ratings relating to the care, respect and communication experienced in their treatment/procedure and dealings with health care professionals.

In all of these sections of the questionnaire - General, Health Care Providers and Treatment/Procedure - the majority of the 66 total respondents were satisfied with the care they received from the hospital in Fort Smith. This satisfaction was reflected in the fact that 96% of respondents said that overall, the care they received was excellent or good.

The majority of comments provided by respondents also reflected the quality of service provided. Hospital staff in particular received numerous comments praising their professionalism and caring attitudes. While some respondents offered suggestions for change and the need for improvement, the majority of comments reflected the high levels of satisfaction found in every question.